

Background

Overall Positions (OPs)¹ provide a statewide rank order of students from 1 (highest) to 25 (lowest) based on students' achievement in Authority subjects studied for the Queensland Senior Certificate. A student's OP shows how well that student has performed in their senior studies when compared with the performances of all other OP-eligible students in Queensland.

OPs are used in the selection of students for tertiary education courses. They are used by tertiary institutions as one basis for selecting applicants for a course when there are more eligible applicants than quota places for that course.

Students are eligible for an OP at the end of Year 12 provided they have completed a minimum of 20 semester units of Authority subjects, including at least three subjects for all four semesters, and sat for the QCS Test in that year.

Field Positions (FPs) are calculated only for OP-eligible students. A field is an area of study that emphasises particular knowledge and skills. An FP is a rank order from 1 (highest) to 10 (lowest) in that area of study. There are five fields with about 20% of students qualifying for all 5 FPs and most students qualifying for 3 or 4 fields.

OP distribution

Figure 1 represents the distribution of the 24 395 Queensland students² who received an OP in 1996 and Table 1 includes for each band: the number, the cumulative number (from 1 up to that band), the percentage and the cumulative percentage of students.

¹In 1992 OPs and FPs replaced the Tertiary Entrance (TE) Score. All data in this document relate to OPs and FPs.

²Visa students are not included unless indicated. A visa student is a student who is not a citizen or permanent resident of Australia. Visa students are not generally regarded as OP/FP-eligible. They may qualify for an equivalent-OP/FP.

Figure 1: 1996 OP distribution

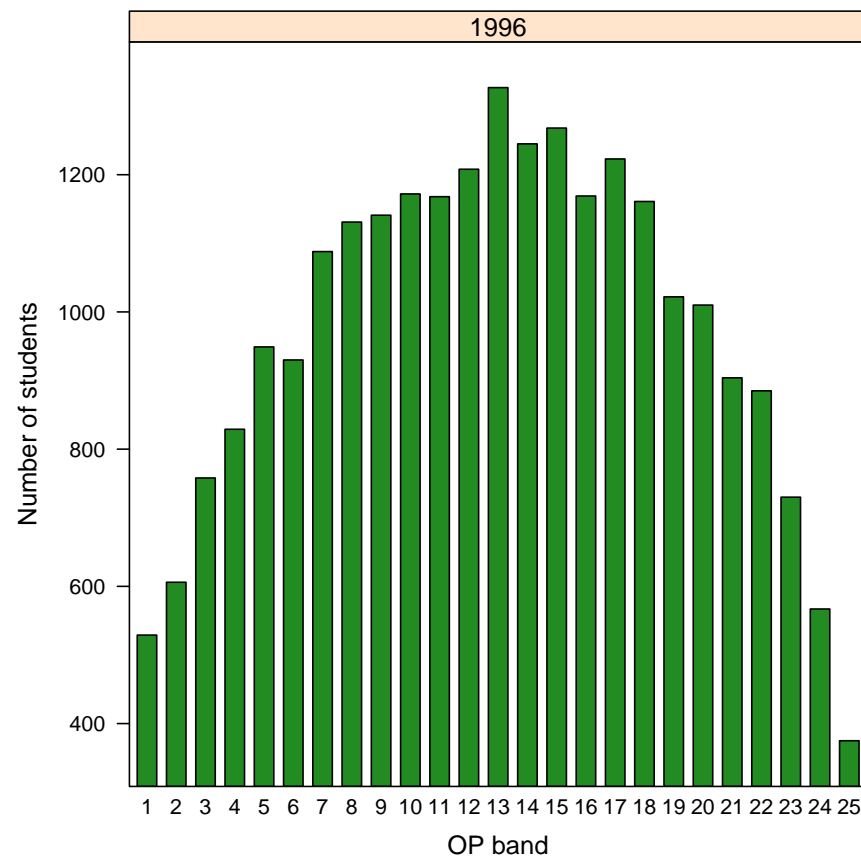


Table 1: 1996 OP distribution

OP band	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Number	529	606	758	829	949	930	1088	1131	1141	1172	1168	1208	1327	1245	1268	1169	1223	1161	1022	1010	904	885	730	567	375
Cumulative	529	1135	1893	2722	3671	4601	5689	6820	7961	9133	10301	11509	12836	14081	15349	16518	17741	18902	19924	20934	21838	22723	23453	24020	24395
Per cent	2.17	2.48	3.11	3.40	3.89	3.81	4.46	4.64	4.68	4.80	4.79	4.95	5.44	5.10	5.20	4.79	5.01	4.76	4.19	4.14	3.71	3.63	2.99	2.32	1.54
Cumulative	2.17	4.65	7.76	11.16	15.05	18.86	23.32	27.96	32.63	37.44	42.23	47.18	52.62	57.72	62.92	67.71	72.72	77.48	81.67	85.81	89.52	93.15	96.14	98.46	100.00

Figure 2: 1996 OP distribution by gender

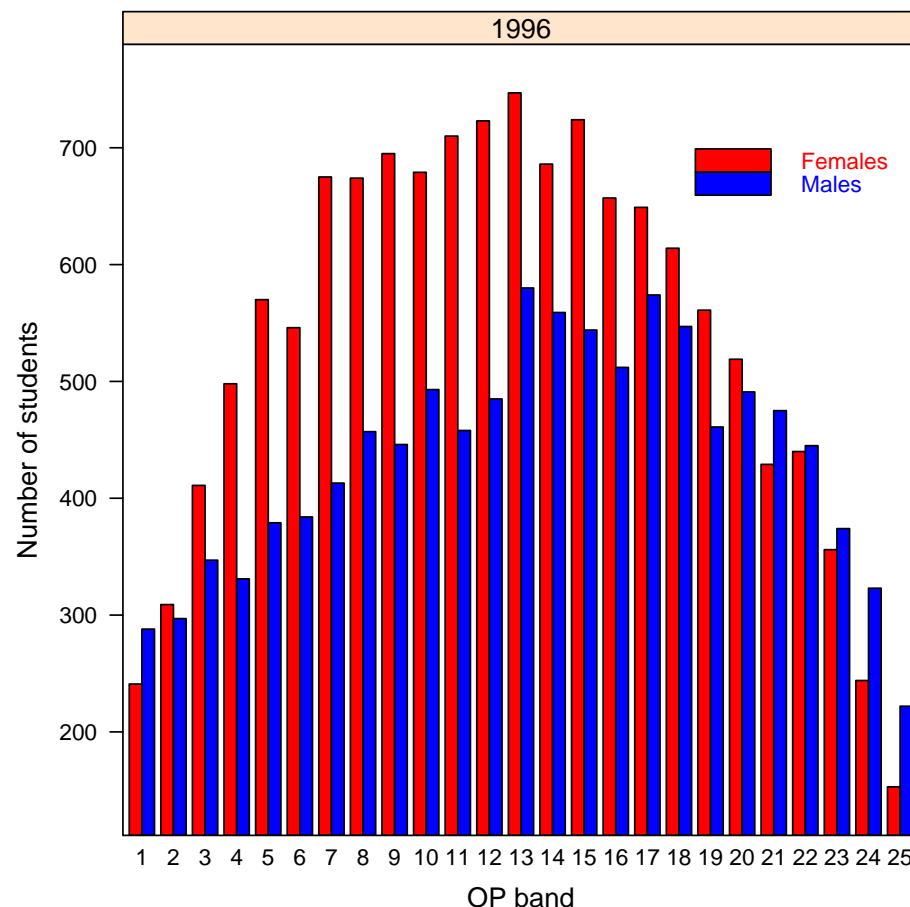
Comparing OPs across years

*The Review of Tertiary Entrance in Queensland 1990*³ recommended “basic year-to-year comparability” of OPs. Consequently, a numerical process is used to equate students’ performances across years. This means that there is no fixed quota of students in each band and that year-to-year differences in the OP-eligible cohort may produce variations in the proportions of students in each band.⁴

OP distribution by gender

Figure 2 and Table 2 show the distribution of OPs by gender. Care is needed when making comparisons between the numbers of females and males in each band. The participation rates are different between the genders as are the proportions of males and females choosing to be OP-eligible — Figure 3 shows a percentage distribution within each gender.

There are more females in each OP band except 1 and 25. In the higher OP bands, there are many more females than males whilst the differences are quite small in bands 19–24.



³ Report submitted to the Minister for Education by the Tertiary Entrance Reviewer Professor Nancy Viviani.

⁴ In 2006 less than one per cent of OP-eligible students received an OP 25 — this is less than half of the percentage of students receiving an OP 25 in 1992. In the same period, the percentage of OP-eligible students receiving an OP 1 has increased from 2.0 to 2.46 per cent.

Table 2: 1996 OP distribution

OP band	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	Total
All students	529	606	758	829	949	930	1088	1131	1141	1172	1168	1208	1327	1245	1268	1169	1223	1161	1022	1010	904	885	730	567	375	24395
Females	241	309	411	498	570	546	675	674	695	679	710	723	747	686	724	657	649	614	561	519	429	440	356	244	153	13510
Males	288	297	347	331	379	384	413	457	446	493	458	485	580	559	544	512	574	547	461	491	475	445	374	323	222	10885

Figure 3: 1996 OP percentage distribution within gender

Calculation of OPs

OPs are calculated each year by the Queensland Studies Authority using student assessment information from Queensland schools. The process for determining OPs is explained further in *Calculating OPs: The Basic Principles*, available at <http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/publications/te/opsbasics.pdf>.

OP percentage distribution within gender

Figure 3 and Table 3 show the percentage distribution of OPs within each gender.⁵ Since, more females than males are eligible for an OP, it is useful to express the figures as percentages of the total number of females or males.

In most years, except for OPs 1 and 2, the higher OP bands contain a greater percentage of the female OP-eligible students. The lower bands, have a greater percentage of males.

⁵ The proportion of females in each OP band expressed as a percentage of the total number of females, and the same for males.

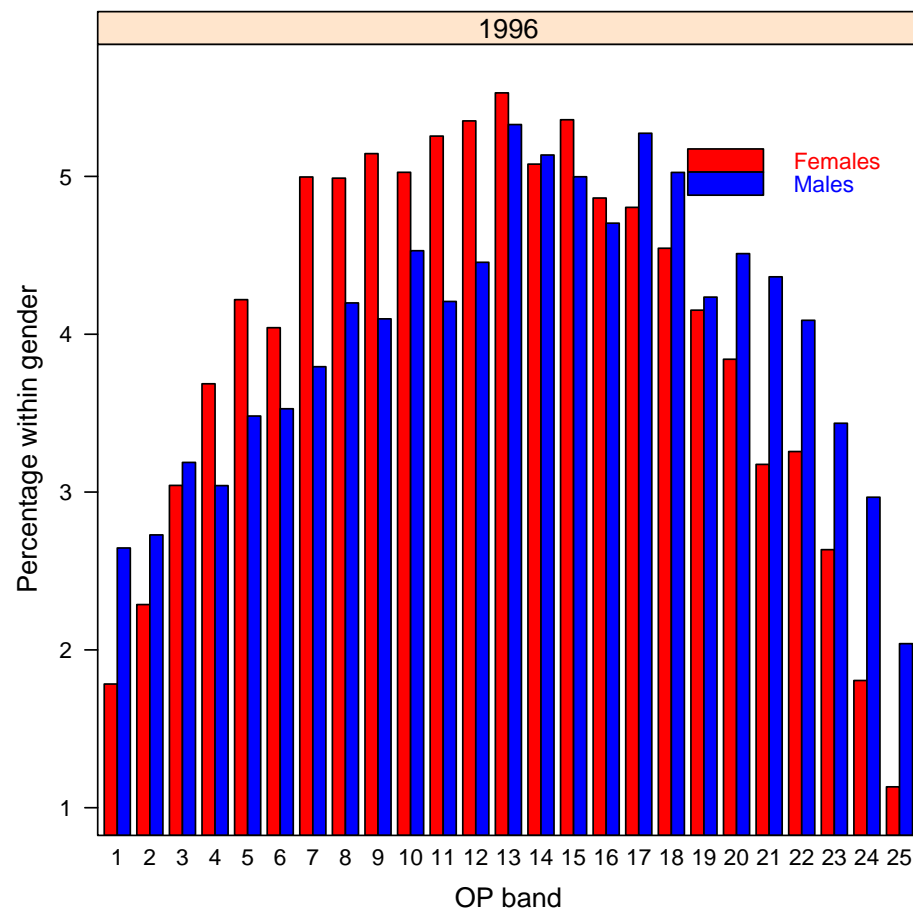


Table 3: 1996 OP percentage distribution within gender

OP band	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
All students %	2.17	2.48	3.11	3.40	3.89	3.81	4.46	4.64	4.68	4.80	4.79	4.95	5.44	5.10	5.20	4.79	5.01	4.76	4.19	4.14	3.71	3.63	2.99	2.32	1.54
Female %	1.78	2.29	3.04	3.69	4.22	4.04	5.00	4.99	5.14	5.03	5.26	5.35	5.53	5.08	5.36	4.86	4.80	4.54	4.15	3.84	3.18	3.26	2.64	1.81	1.13
Male %	2.65	2.73	3.19	3.04	3.48	3.53	3.79	4.20	4.10	4.53	4.21	4.46	5.33	5.14	5.00	4.70	5.27	5.03	4.24	4.51	4.36	4.09	3.44	2.97	2.04

FP distributions

Figure 4 shows the FP distributions for 1996. In up to five fields, FPs show a student's rank on a 1 to 10 scale (with 1 being the highest) based on their achievement in Authority subjects. These fields identify areas of study that emphasise particular knowledge and skills. FPs are determined only for OP-eligible students and students only receive FPs in the fields for which they are eligible, according to the Authority Subjects they studied.

The five fields are:

- Field A** — extended written expression involving complex analysis and synthesis of ideas
- Field B** — short written communication involving reading, comprehension and expression in English or a foreign language
- Field C** — basic numeracy involving simple calculations, and graphical and tabular interpretation
- Field D** — solving complex problems involving mathematical symbols and abstractions
- Field E** — substantial practical performance involving physical or creative arts or expressive skills

Table 4: FP distributions

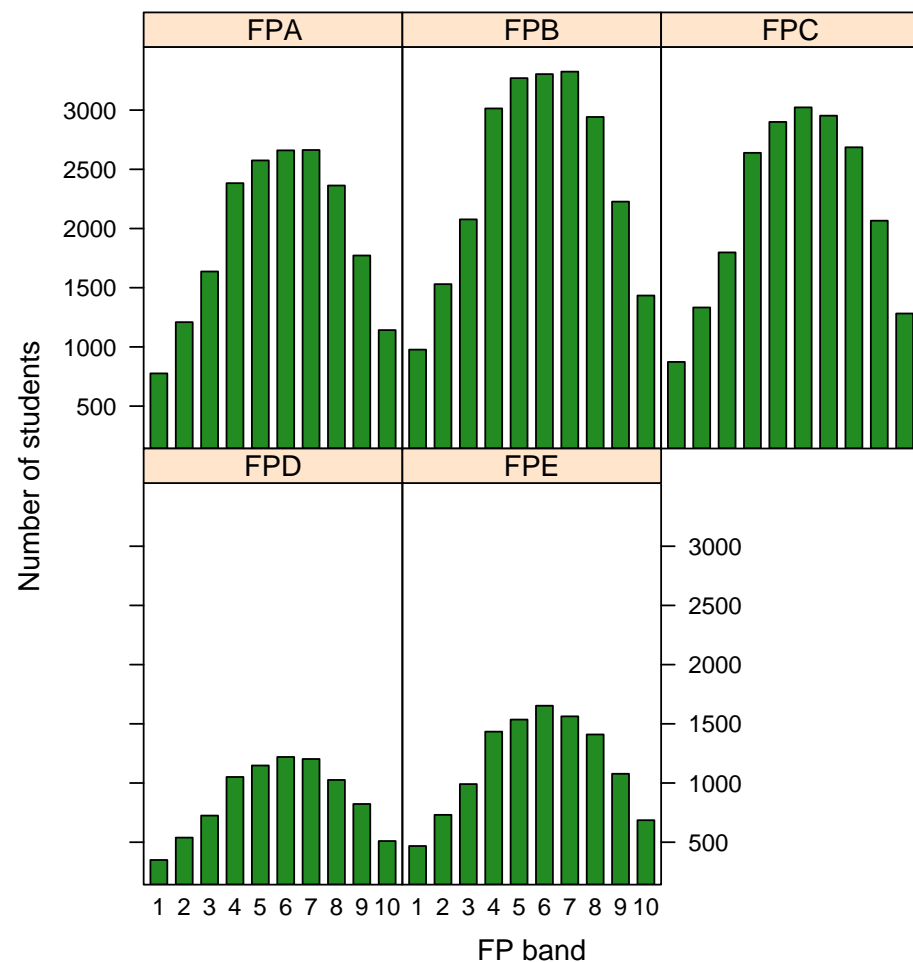
Field	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
A	776	1209	1637	2383	2575	2660	2663	2363	1772	1142	19180
B	977	1530	2077	3014	3270	3304	3325	2942	2227	1434	24100
C	873	1333	1798	2639	2900	3023	2953	2686	2066	1282	21553
D	350	539	725	1051	1148	1220	1203	1026	823	510	8595
E	468	731	991	1434	1536	1653	1563	1410	1078	686	11550

Subject Weights

While FPs are calculated using a similar process to OPs, Authority subjects are not weighted equally for the calculations of FPs. Field weights mean that different subjects contribute differently to the calculations for each field⁶. For example, English (5) is more heavily weighted than Maths B (1) when calculating its contribution to FP A. Table 5 lists all Authority subjects offered in 1996 and the weights for each field position.

⁶ For the calculation of OPs, all subjects are weighted equally.

Figure 4: 1996 FP distribution



1996 State Distribution of Overall Positions (OPs) and Field Positions (FPs)

Table 5: Subject weights for calculating OPs and FPs

Id	Syllabus	OP	A	B	C	D	E	Id	Syllabus	OP	A	B	C	D	E
1	English	5	5	5	1		4	41	Physics	5	1	2	5	5	1
5	French	5	2	5	1		4	42	Biology	5	3	3	5	3	3
6	German	5	2	5	1		4	43	Earth Science	5	3	3	5	3	3
7	Indonesian	5	2	5	1		4	44	Multi-Strand Science	5	3	3	5	3	3
8	Italian	5	2	5	1		4	45	Marine Studies	5	3	3	4	3	4
9	Japanese	5	2	5	1		4	51	Agricultural Science	5	4	3	5	2	3
10	Russian	5	2	5	1		4	60	Accounting	5	3	3	5	4	2
11	Chinese	5	2	5	1		4	61	Secretarial Studies	5	2	3	3	1	4
12	Vietnamese	5	2	5	1		4	62	Business Organisation & Management	5	4	3	4	2	3
14	Modern Greek	5	2	5	1		4	67	Health Education	5	4	3	3	1	3
15	French Extension	5	3	5	1		4	68	Physical Education	5	3	3	3	1	5
16	German Extension	5	3	5	1		4	71	Home Economics	5	4	3	3	1	4
17	Latin	5	2	5	1		2	74	Engineering Technology	5	3	3	5	4	3
18	Spanish	5	2	5	1		4	76	Graphics	5	1	2	5	3	4
20	Ancient History	5	5	5	2			78	Technology Studies	5	3	3	5	3	4
21	Modern History	5	5	5	2			80	Visual Art	5	3	3	1		5
23	Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Studies	5	4	4	2		2	81	Music	5	2	2	2	1	5
24	Geography	5	4	5	4	2	2	82	Speech & Drama	5	3	3	1		5
25	Political Studies	5	5	5	3	1	1	83	Theatre	5	3	3	1		5
27	Economics	5	4	5	5	2		84	Film & Television	5	3	3	1		5
28	Study of Society (1992 Trial-Pilot)	5	4	5	3	1	2	85	Dance	5	3	3	1		5
28	Study of Society (1995)	5	5	4	3	1	1	86	Study of Religion	5	4	5	1		1
29	Legal Studies	5	4	5	3	1	3	87	Information Processing & Technology	5	3	3	4	4	3
30	Logic	5	4	4	3	4		88	Drama	5	3	3	1		5
36	Mathematics A	5	1	2	5	5		89	Film & Television	5	4	3	2		5
37	Mathematics B	5	1	2	5	5		90	Health & Physical Education	5	3	3	3	1	5
38	Mathematics C	5	1	2	5	5		91	Music	5	3	3	2	2	5
40	Chemistry	5	2	3	5	5	3	92	Music Extension (Performance)	5	2	2	2	1	5

FP distributions by gender

Figure 5 shows the FPs and their distributions in the state for 1996 by gender.

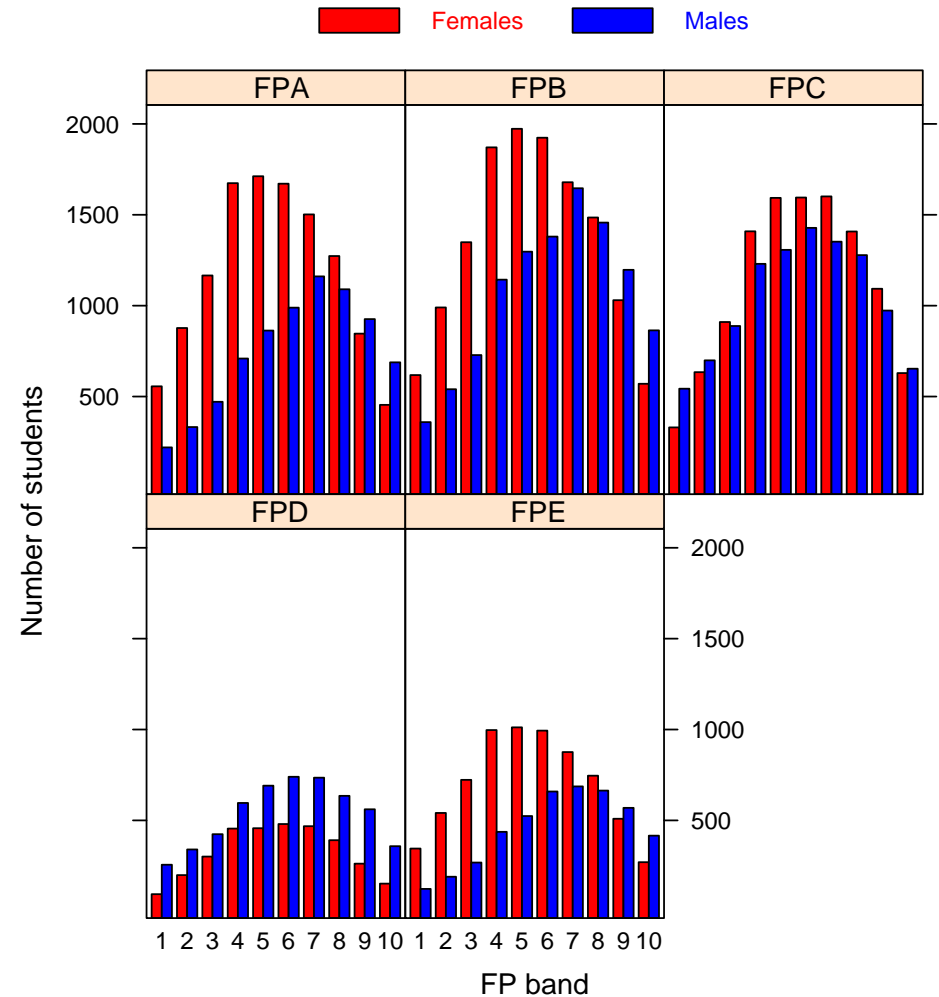
Table 6: Numbers of students eligible for each FP by gender

Gender	Field A	Field B	Field C	Field D	Field E
Female	11731	13489	11202	3259	7013
Male	7449	10611	10351	5336	4537

Table 7: Percentages of students per FP band, by gender

Field	Gender	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A	All students	4.1	6.3	8.5	12.4	13.4	13.9	13.9	12.3	9.2	6.0
	Female	4.7	7.5	9.9	14.3	14.6	14.2	12.8	10.9	7.2	3.9
	Male	3.0	4.5	6.3	9.5	11.6	13.3	15.6	14.6	12.4	9.2
B	All students	4.1	6.4	8.6	12.5	13.6	13.7	13.8	12.2	9.2	6.0
	Female	4.6	7.3	10.0	13.9	14.6	14.3	12.5	11.0	7.6	4.2
	Male	3.4	5.1	6.9	10.8	12.2	13.0	15.5	13.7	11.3	8.1
C	All students	4.1	6.2	8.3	12.2	13.5	14.0	13.7	12.5	9.6	6.0
	Female	3.0	5.7	8.1	12.6	14.2	14.2	14.3	12.6	9.8	5.6
	Male	5.3	6.8	8.6	11.9	12.6	13.8	13.1	12.4	9.4	6.3
D	All students	4.1	6.3	8.4	12.2	13.4	14.2	14.0	11.9	9.6	5.9
	Female	2.9	6.1	9.2	14.0	14.0	14.7	14.4	12.0	8.0	4.7
	Male	4.8	6.4	8.0	11.2	13.0	13.9	13.8	11.9	10.5	6.7
E	All students	4.1	6.3	8.6	12.4	13.3	14.3	13.5	12.2	9.3	5.9
	Female	4.9	7.7	10.3	14.2	14.4	14.2	12.5	10.6	7.3	3.9
	Male	2.7	4.2	5.9	9.6	11.6	14.5	15.1	14.6	12.5	9.2

Figure 5: 1996 FP distribution by gender



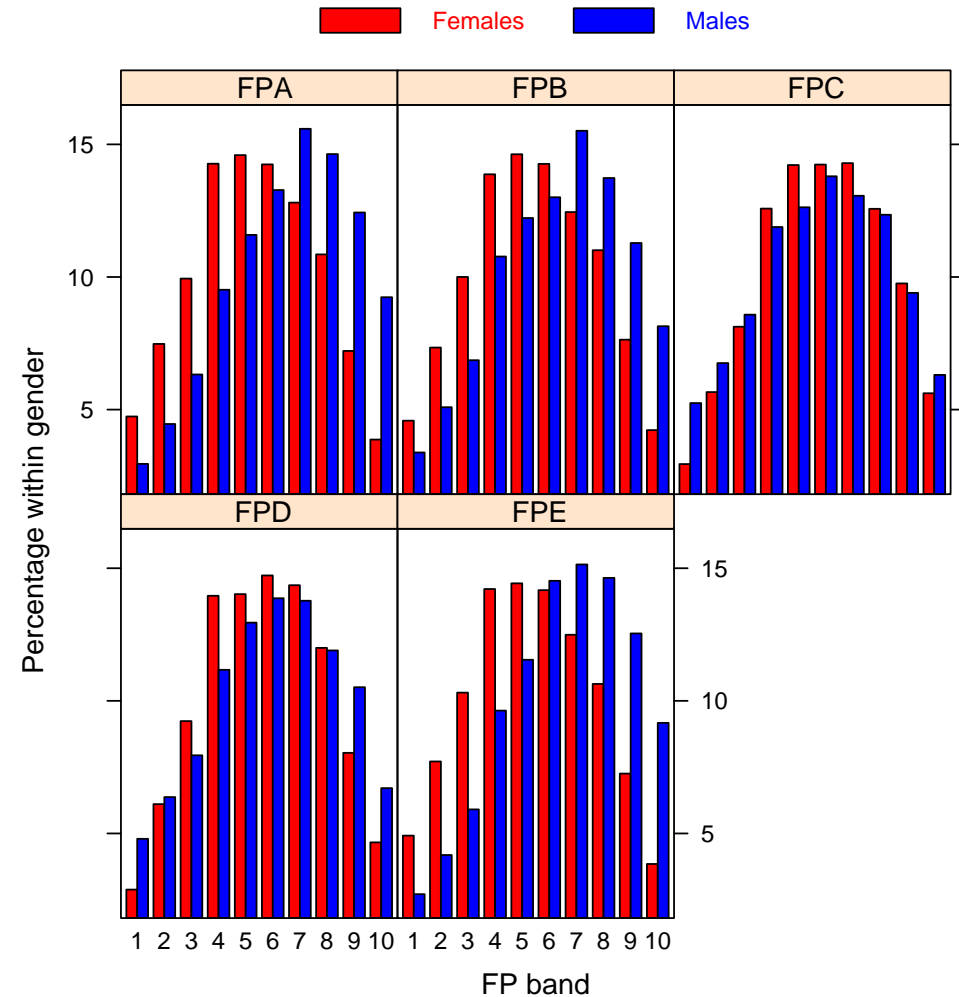
FPs percentage distribution within gender

Figure 6 shows FPs and their distributions in the state for 1996 by gender. These show the number of boys that achieved each FP as a percentage of FP-eligible boys, and the same for girls. Table 8 shows the combinations of fields for which students were eligible in 1996.

Table 8: Numbers of students per FP combination

Sets of FPs	Students	Total	Per cent	
ABCDE	2095	5 FPs	2095	8.59
ABCD	2864			
ABCE	6009			
BCDE	539	4 FPs	9412	38.58
ABC	5628			
ABE	1784			
BCD	2854			
BCE	858			
CDE	4	3 FPs	11128	45.62
AB	800			
BC	416			
BE	236			
CD	239			
CE	21	2 FPs	1712	7.02
B	17			
C	26			
E	4	1 FP	47	0.19

Figure 6: 1996 FP distribution within gender



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